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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR WATERS/ABRAMS/SINGH

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TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [ASEC](#)
SUBJECT: ALLON SHEVUT: PROPERTY VALUES HIGH

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer, Thomas M.Duffy, per reasons 1.
4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: On 16 August Poloff visited the Allon Shevut settlement in the Gush Etzion bloc and met AmCit Regional Councilwoman Ruth Lieberman. According to Lieberman, Gush Etzion residents are more confident than ever that their community will be inside Israel in any permanent status agreement, and property values are skyrocketing. Lieberman runs the "Eretz Nehederet" program with former Israeli MK and cabinet member Uzi Landau, which brought in 30,000 "non-affiliated" Israelis for free tours of Gush Etzion last year. END SUMMARY.

Allon Shevut Community: High Property Values

2. (C) Poloff met with AmCit Gush Etzion settler Ruth Lieberman August 16 in the settlement enclave of Allon Shevut, one of the communities in the Gush Etzion bloc. A member of the Gush Etzion regional council, Lieberman recounted the history of the Jewish presence at Gush Etzion from the 1920's, including the 1948 attack on Jews in the area by Jordanian forces and Arabs from Hebron, and said the current residents are motivated by a mix of "quality of life" interests and ideology. She noted that some are the descendants of Jewish villagers who lived in the area before 1948 and who returned after 1967. According to Lieberman, there are 650 families, of whom one-third are Amcits, in Allon Shevut ("Return to the Oak"). (Note: According to Israeli journalist Gershon Gorenberg, Allon Shevut was the first settlement established after 1967 for commuters working in Jerusalem rather than the earlier model of communal kibbutz settlements. End Note)

3. (C) Lieberman says Allon Shevut residents are confident their community, which is built on the Israeli side of the planned route of the separation barrier, will be included in any permanent status agreement. She said home values are skyrocketing, and although it is perfectly legal to sell residences in Allon Shevut, no one is selling or moving out. She noted that her 3000 square foot home is valued at \$420,000. Lieberman added that in Karme Zur, southwest of Allon Shevut, on the fringe of Gush Etzion and outside the planned route of the separation barrier, home values are decreasing, although demand remains high.

4. (C) According to Lieberman, some 1000 Arabs who are members of the Mousha family that she said helped save Jews in 1948, live in Gush Etzion, and relations between the Jewish settlers and these Arabs "couldn't be better." The Arab children, she noted, attend school in the neighboring "hostile" Arab villages.

Bringing in Visitors

15. (C) Lieberman said she and former Israeli MK and cabinet member Uzi Landau decided this past year to bring "non-affiliated" Israelis "who are likely to vote" from universities and communities to experience life in Gush Etzion and absorb its "normal suburban atmosphere." The program - "Eretz Nehederet" or "Wonderful Country" - aimed to bring in 10,000 participants and brought in some 30,000 over the last year.

DUFFY